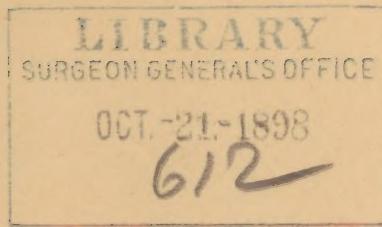


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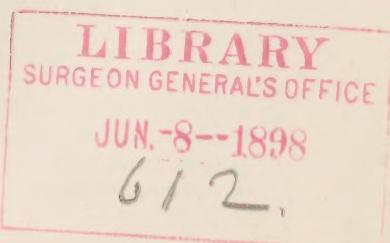
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A Case of Partial Dislocation of the Occipito- Atloidean Articulation.

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presented by the author



A CASE OF PARTIAL DISLOCATION OF THE OCCIPITO- ATLOIDEAN ARTICULATION.

The subject of this paper was a well-developed, muscular man, 26 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches high, and weighing about 160 lbs. While drinking in a saloon he was struck twice in the face lightly, clinched with his opponent, and fell backwards, striking his head upon the rail at the base of the bar at which he was drinking. He lost consciousness, and was dead before the arrival of a physician.

At the autopsy, sixteen hours after death, a slight bruise was found upon the left side of the lower lip, and another on the left tibia. With these exceptions, the examination was entirely negative, aside from the points to be now mentioned.

The calvarium was of rather greater thickness than normal, otherwise negative. Underneath the pia was found much clotted blood, particularly in the region of the medulla. Upon section, the brain was normal.

The skull was normal in its relations with the atlas, but was very movable upon that bone. The movement of the atlas, by the finger inserted into the foramen magnum, could be easily felt by the fingers applied posteriorly to the neck. There was no fracture. A ragged tear three-fourths of an inch long existed in the tissues binding the occipital bone to the atlas, and the right vertebral artery was entirely torn across, just below its entrance to the cavity of the skull. This was obviously the source of the hemorrhage within the cranium.

The force of the blows upon the face seemed to us, from the trivial signs remaining, entirely inadequate to the production of such a subluxation. It seems more probable, in our opinion, that the subject, easily losing his balance from a moderate blow, in falling struck his neck upon the rail mentioned in such a way as to cause this rail to act as a fulcrum between the head and the body. It is easily conceivable that such a condition as we have described might originate in this manner, especially at a time when the muscles were more or less relaxed under the influence of alcohol.

We place this case on record on account of its extreme rarity. Hamilton states (*Fractures and Dislocations*), that "Lassus, Palatta and Bouisson have each reported one example of dislocation of the head upon the atlas. In neither case was the dislocation complete, but death occurred speedily in every instance."

Dariste exhibited to the Anatomical Society of Paris a specimen of this incomplete luxation of the occipito-atloidean articulation, with stretching of the transverse ligament, the patient from whom the specimen had been taken having lived for more than a year after the accident, when he died from a tuberculosis of the brain.

Moullin states that this accident is very rare, but can be produced by a violent blow upon the occiput, while the patient is stooping forward. Wyeth states that the accident is probably always fatal. Several other authors consulted state either that the accident is very rare, or else do not mention it.

